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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Soil Conservation Service

Incentive Awards Handbook

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SECTION I--PLAN OF THE INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

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- A. A transmittal notice number and issuance date appear at the bottom of each page of the Handbook. Unless otherwise specified in the text, this is the "effective" date of the material that appears above.
- B. All material for filing in this Handbook (initial issues as well as additions, deletions, and corrections) will be forwarded to the Handbook holders with a covering transmittal notice. Each notice will list the material being transmitted, filing instructions, and any background or related information, as appropriate.
- C. The Handbook will be issued to SCS employees concerned with the processing of employee contributions to Management Improvement.
- D. The Incentive Awards Handbook has been developed under the general direction of the Management Improvement and Awards Committee. The Assistant Administrator for Management will approve any needed changes or revisions.

SECTION II--GENERAL

A. Definitions:

- 1. Act - The term "act" means Title III of Public Law 763, 83d Congress, approved September 1, 1954, referred to as the Employee's Incentive Awards Act.
- 2. Department - The term "Department" means the Department of Agriculture.
- 3. Employee - The term "employee" includes any person who holds some type of appointment in the Department of Agriculture.
- 4. Plan - The term "plan" is the Secretary's written statement giving effect to the act and the Commission's regulations and instructions governing the Incentive Awards Program.
- 5. Employee Contribution - The term "employee contribution" means:
 - (a) suggestion, invention, superior accomplishment, or other personal effort which contributes to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operations, or
 - (b) the performance of an employee of a special act or service in the public interest in connection with or related to his official employment.
- 6. Incentive Award - The term "incentive award" means either a cash award or an honor award, or both.
- 7. Honor Award - The term "honor award" means a Distinguished Service Award, Superior Service Award, or Length-of-Service Award granted by the Secretary or Soil Conservation Service Citation granted by the Administrator.

8. Departmental Award - The term "departmental award" means an incentive award granted by the Secretary for an approved employee contribution from an employee or employees of the Department.
9. Presidential Award - The term "Presidential Award" means an award granted by the President in accordance with the act.

B. Authority:

The Soil Conservation Service Awards program is based on Title III of Public Law 763, 83d Congress approved September 1, 1954; the pertinent regulations and instructions issued by the Civil Service Commission and the Incentive Awards plan and regulations of the United States Department of Agriculture.

C. Kinds of Awards:

1. Cash Awards - Cash awards may be granted for ideas or performance as described in this handbook. State and Territorial Conservationists and the Administrator have authority to approve and grant awards up to \$300. The Department of Agriculture must approve all awards over \$300 and up to \$5000. Awards over \$5000 and up to \$25,000 must be approved by the Civil Service Commission.
2. Department of Agriculture Honor Awards - The Department of Agriculture grants three honor awards to employees who qualify; Distinguished Service, Superior Service and Length-of-Service.
3. Presidential Award - Presented by the President to outstanding civilian employees.
4. Soil Conservation Service Awards - The Soil Conservation Service uses three types of awards within the Service; the "agency" citation, safety awards, and letters of commendation.

D. Promotion and Publicity:

In order to accomplish the objectives of the Incentive Awards Program, it must be well understood and have the sincere and enthusiastic support of all employees as well as supervisors.

1. The Washington Committee will take the lead in developing, compiling, and recommending promotional aids such as:
 - a. Popular type pamphlets, posters, promotional ideas, etc.
 - b. Service-wide publicity on awards granted by the Administrator.
2. State and Territorial offices will:
 - a. Make full use of material issued by the Department and Washington office, and in addition develop materials of their own.

- b. Arrange appropriate ceremonies for presenting awards.
- c. Prepare news releases on awards presented.
- d. Issue releases on money saved through improved management or additional services rendered.

3. Supervisors will:

- a. Assist actively with the promotion and operation of the Incentive Awards Program.
- b. Encourage employees to submit ideas for improvement.
- c. Assist employees with the development and testing of ideas.
- d. Identify and recommend awards for employees who deserve recognition for their contributions.

E. Ideas and Performance that Warrant Consideration:

- 1. An idea, device, procedure, technique, method, or system which results in money savings or important improvements in operations. Originality of the idea is not necessarily a prerequisite.
- 2. The suggestion or development of an invention. Whether or not it is eligible for a patent is immaterial.
- 3. Sustained above-average work performance or production by individuals or groups.
- 4. Performance which involves the overcoming of exceptional or unusual difficulties.
- 5. Exemplary or courageous handling of an emergency situation in connection with or related to official employment.
- 6. Supervisors who have done an outstanding job of motivating the interest and participation of their employees in management improvement.

F. Methods of Discovery:

Employees will use such regular methods as performance ratings, review of plans of operations, or functional and program inspections, to discover individuals and units meriting recognition. Cash and honor awards offer recognition in addition to outstanding ratings. Those few individuals receiving an outstanding performance rating should be considered for cash or honor awards, or both. Supervisors should be alert to discover individuals and units under their supervision who merit recognition. State, Territorial and Area offices should devote a portion of a staff meeting at least once each year to a discussion of methods of discovering employee contributions.

G. Additional Recognition:

The Personnel Management Division and State and Territorial Administrative offices will consider awards given under the Incentive Awards Act when qualifying and selecting employees for promotion. State and Territorial offices will prepare sufficient copies of all letters of notification or transmittal of awards to provide copies in the personnel folders at Area, State and Washington offices.

H. Handling Disapproval Actions:

From the standpoint of maintaining employee interest and participation, the handling of disapprovals is an important task of supervisors, evaluating officials, and awards committees. Good judgment, tact, and a careful consideration of the originator's viewpoint are vital factors in the successful handling of disapproval cases. An effective method of handling disapprovals is through personal discussion of the decision with the originator, giving him a clear explanation of the evaluation. If the volume of cases does not permit the use of this method, personal letters should be used for notification of disapproval action. Such letters should be written to accomplish the purpose of the personal interview.

The Service wants and needs ideas; every letter turning down an idea should therefore be expressed in terms that will convince the originator that -

1. The Service appreciates his sending in the idea, even if it could not be used.
2. The Service invites him to send in others, even though the one could not be used.
3. The reasons for not utilizing his idea are sound.

SECTION III--PROCESSING EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS

A. Submission of Suggestions and Recommendations:

1. Recommendations for performance type cash awards will normally be initiated by the immediate supervisor. The recommendation may, however, be submitted by any employee who is able to properly document the proposal. The recommendation must be submitted within six months following the completion of the period of performance or the special act or service.
2. Suggestions should be submitted to supervisors on form SCS 228. A simple memorandum will, however, be acceptable. Supervisors review the proposal, add their comments and recommendations, approve the use of the proposal within their work area if within their authority, and send it on through channels to the appropriate management improvement and awards committee without delay.

B. Investigations:

State and Territorial offices will promptly process all employee contributions. In all cases, such contributions should be acknowledged immediately upon receipt, expressing appreciation for the suggestion or recommendation.

Management Improvement and Awards Committees will have major responsibility for investigating, reviewing and recommending action on all proposals. It is suggested, however, that the Committee's secretary or some other individual be delegated authority to acknowledge contributions as they are received, review them, route them to technical people for comments as needed, and otherwise get the proposal ready for appraisal by the committee when it meets. This may involve obtaining additional information from field offices for honor award recommendations, preparing additional copies as needed, preparing three copies of appraisal form 227 for proposals involving cash awards, trying out suggestions, assembling data on monetary savings, etc. A good preliminary investigation should enable the awards committee to make its recommendation for adoption, rejection or further study without undue discussion or delay.

C. Review and Appraisal:

1. State and Territorial Awards Committees will review and appraise proposals after pertinent data has been assembled. They will prepare a recommendation to the State or Territorial Conservationist, including the amount in case of cash awards. If the recommendation is for rejection, the committee will prepare a letter for the State Conservationist to the employee explaining in detail the reasons for rejection. All cash awards recommendations will be reviewed for possible honorary recognition.
2. Cartographic and Engineering and Watershed Planning Unit committees will review all awards proposals from employees in the Units, forward recommended proposals to the Washington Committee through the Unit Head and advise employees of action taken by the Committee. Where one committee serves both a state and a Cartographic and Engineering and Watershed Planning Unit the same procedure will be used; that is, recommendations from the committee will go to the State Conservationist for a state employee and to the Washington committee through the Head of the Unit for a Unit employee.

D. Approval of Cash Awards Under Delegated Authority:

1. Final approval of cash awards up to \$300 will be made by the State or Territorial Conservationist for employees under him and by the Administrator for employees attached to the Washington office. Heads of the Cartographic and Engineering and Watershed Planning Units may approve the adoption and use of suggestions but not the granting of an award. Recommendations for all awards over \$300 must be submitted through channels to the Department for approval.

2. Employees will be told how their suggestions are being handled if it cannot be processed within 30 days.
3. Payment: Initial payment for approved suggestions will be made from funds allocated to the State or Territory. (See Section 536 of Budget and Finance Handbook.) Initial cash awards for work improvement proposals may be made pending a determination of actual savings during a period of use. Final payment will be made after the actual savings are determined. If the suggestion is approved for use Service-wide, Department-wide or Government-wide, additional payments will be made from national level funds as the suggestion is put into use.
4. Certificate of Merit: A Certificate of Merit signed by the Administrator or State Conservationist approving the award will be given with each award of \$50 or more and for all cash awards for sustained work performance or special acts or services.
5. Withholding Tax: Federal income taxes will be withheld from cash payments.
6. Request for Reconsideration: A request for reconsideration of the decision made by an awards committee or approving officer may be made by the employee or employees initiating the suggestion or recommendation. A written statement setting forth the reasons for requesting reconsideration should be submitted. If the information warrants such action the case may be reopened.

E. Transmittal of Recommendations:

State or Territorial Conservationists will submit to the Washington Awards Committee recommendations for awards requiring the Administrator's or Department approval. In addition, they will send all work improvement proposals meriting consideration for use nationally or in several states to the Washington committee for review.

SECTION IV--CASH AWARDS

A. Tangible Savings:

1. The amount of an award shall normally be based on, but not necessarily limited to, the estimated net monetary savings for the first full year of operation following its adoption. The amount of the award shall be determined in accordance with the following table and other provisions of this section.

2. Awards Table for Tangible Savings:

<u>Savings</u>	<u>Amount of Award</u>
Up to \$200.....	\$10.
\$201 - \$1,000	\$10 for the first \$200 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$100 or fraction thereof.
\$1,000 - \$10,000	\$50 for the first \$1,000 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$200 or fraction thereof.
\$10,001 - \$100,000	\$275 for the first \$10,000 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$1,000 or fraction thereof.
\$100,000 or more	\$725 for the first \$100,000 in savings and \$5 for each additional \$5,000 or fraction thereof.

3. The award for an improvement with a high installation cost that will yield measurable savings over several years may be based on an average of the estimated net savings over a period of years.

4. Awards higher than the amounts specified in the table may be made:

a. When the net first year savings would not provide an adequate basis for determining the cash award;

b. When each individual's normal share of a group cash award would be less than \$10. (See page 16.)

5. The amount of the cash award should be determined whenever feasible by tangible savings determined by estimates or after trial period.

6. Example of a contribution to be rewarded on basis of the Table of Tangible Savings:

A work unit conservationist suggests a new method of compiling work unit accomplishments which is installed in one area including 10 work units. The man hour saving the first year amounts to \$275. Under such conditions the employee could be paid \$15.00. If the State Conservationist approved the suggestion and issued instructions for placing it into effect in all work units, the award would be based on the estimated net savings in the entire state.

CASH AWARD TABLE FOR QUICK REFERENCE FOR
SAVINGS UP TO \$5,000

<u>Savings</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Savings</u>	<u>Award</u>
Up to \$200	\$10	\$2,001 - 2,200	\$80
\$201 - 300	\$15	\$2,201 - 2,400	\$85
\$301 - 400	\$20	\$2,401 - 2,600	\$90
\$401 - 500	\$25	\$2,601 - 2,800	\$95
\$501 - 600	\$30	\$2,801 - 3,000	\$100
\$601 - 700	\$35	\$3,001 - 3,200	\$105
\$701 - 800	\$40	\$3,201 - 3,400	\$110
\$801 - 900	\$45	\$3,401 - 3,600	\$115
\$901 - 1,000	\$50	\$3,601 - 3,800	\$120
\$1,001 - 1,200	\$55	\$3,801 - 4,000	\$125
\$1,201 - 1,400	\$60	\$4,001 - 4,200	\$130
\$1,401 - 1,600	\$65	\$4,201 - 4,400	\$135
\$1,601 - 1,800	\$70	\$4,401 - 4,600	\$140
\$1,801 - 2,000	\$75	\$4,601 - 4,800	\$145
		\$4,801 - 5,000	\$150

D. Intangible Benefits:

It may not be possible to appraise contributions on a cash basis.

1. Suggestions, work improvements, inventions or work performance that result in improved working conditions, services to the public, employee morale, safety, or other improvements are in this category. The amount of cash awards to be granted for employee contributions resulting in intangible benefits of this type shall be determined on the basis of the resulting benefit to operations after full consideration of such factors as:
 - a. Extent and scope of application;
 - b. Significance of the contribution;
 - c. Importance of activity or operation affected.
2. Good and consistent administrative judgment must be the principal guide in setting values on improvements which do not result in money savings. The scope of application of the improvement is an important consideration in determining its value. Some of the questions to be considered are:
 - a. Will it apply to only one work unit or will it have application over an entire state?
 - b. Will it be used by a small group such as a single work unit or other group of employees.
 - c. Will the benefits accrue to a small segment of the Service program or to a major part.

3. Awards Table - Intangible Benefits:

The following table is for evaluation of the extent of intangible benefits realized from a contribution. Under certain conditions the table may not apply. If such is the case, the reasons for awarding a different amount will be documented fully.

<u>Value of Benefit</u>	<u>Small Org. Unit</u>	<u>2 - 15 Org. Units</u>	<u>15 - 30 Org. Units</u>	<u>30 - 100 Org. Units</u>	<u>100 - 500 Org. Units</u>
Limited	\$10 - 15	\$15 - 25	\$25 - 35	\$35 - 50	\$50 - 100
Moderate	\$15 - 25	\$25 - 35	\$35 - 50	\$50 - 100	\$100 - 300

4. Examples of extent of application are given below:

- a. Small organization unit - Work Unit - 1 to 6 employees.
- b. 2 - 15 organization units - Area, field cartographic unit, 20 to 40 employees, branch 50 - 100.
- c. 15 - 30 organization units Small state or several areas in large one, division.
- d. 30 - 100 " " Medium size state, 100 - 300 employees.
- e. 100 - 500 " " Large state or several small ones, more than 300 employees.

5. Examples of the application of the Intangible Table follows:

- a. A work improvement proposal with limited benefit (affecting a single operation) applied in only one work unit or a small segment of an office -- cash award, \$10 to \$15; applied in 30 to 100 work units cash award, \$35 to \$50.
- b. A work improvement proposal with moderate benefit (affecting several operations of an important conservation practice or management activity) applied in a single area of 2 to 15 work units -- cash award, \$15 - \$25; applied in a small state or Washington office division with 50 or more employees -- cash award, \$35 to \$50.

- C. Intangible awards in excess of \$300 will be determined and administered by the Department in accordance with the departmental awards table, set forth below:

<u>Value of Benefit</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Agency Wide</u>	<u>Dept. Wide</u>
Moderate	--	--	\$300 - 500	\$500 - 725
High	\$300 - 500	\$500 - 725	\$725 - 1000	\$1000 - 2000
Outstanding	\$725 - 1000	\$1000 - 2000	\$2000 - 3000	\$3000 - 5000

C. Criteria for Granting Awards:

1. A suggestion submitted by an employee will be considered adopted and eligible for an award when it is actually put into effect or a determination made by appropriate authority for its imminent use. In those instances where delays will be necessary in order to determine the value of an adopted idea, an initial cash award will be paid, the amount depending upon a conservative estimate of the anticipated value of the employee's contribution.
2. A suggestion must be adopted within two years after its receipt for consideration to be eligible for an award, unless highly unusual or special circumstances intervene.
3. Employees may be recommended for an award for superior work performance at any time. In any case, employees should be considered for an award when supervisors assign a performance rating. Employees need not be rated "outstanding" to be eligible for an award. In fact, the requirements for an outstanding rating are somewhat higher than those for sustained above average performance. Opportunities for recommending an award based on exceptional work performance may occur on any review or inspection of a function or organizational unit.
4. No more than one award which is based solely on superior work performance will be granted an employee within a twelve-month period.
5. A cash award for sustained above average work performance must cover a period of at least six months and will normally be limited to the equivalent of a two-step pay increase or \$300 whichever is the smaller.
6. Cash awards for special acts or services connected with official employment cannot ordinarily be measured in tangible savings. The amount of such an award may be determined on the basis of intangible benefits.
7. No employee may be given two cash awards for the same contribution except that when actual first year savings are sufficiently greater than the estimate of savings on which the original award was based, or when broader use is made of the contribution than was contemplated by the original award, a supplementary award may be made subject to the appropriate standards as set forth in this Handbook. Two or more employees may be given cash awards for the same contribution only in a shared or group award.

8. When the employee's contribution is judged to be within his job responsibilities, the following should be considered in determining whether the contribution is sufficiently superior to warrant an award:
 - a. Requirements of the Job: The employee's standard of performance should be reviewed to determine the degree to which the employee's contribution exceeds the normal requirements of the work for which he is being paid. An affirmative answer to such questions as the following would ordinarily preclude consideration for a cash award:
 - (1) Is the employee expected or required to make contributions of the type under consideration? However, if there is anything special or unique about the particular contribution, he may be considered for an award.
 - (2) Is the nature of the contribution such that the employee's performance would be judged less than satisfactory if he had not made this contribution?
 - (3) Is the contribution one pertaining to the immediate work area which the employee can place into operation without consulting higher authority and which affects only his work?

Such performance may, but need not necessarily include any specific identifiable contribution other than the high caliber of the service performed.

D. Group Awards:

When a contribution has been made by more than one employee or by a group of employees, all employees contributing may share in the award. If cash is awarded, the grant may be in equal shares, or to each employee in proportion to his contribution. The total award should generally be the amount authorized for that type of award if made to one individual. When individual shares are less than \$10 the total may be increased sufficiently to provide a minimum of \$10 for each employee.

E. Cash Awards for Honorary Recognition:

Employees may receive both cash and Department or Agency Honor Awards for the same superior work performance or special act or service. Justification for the honor award may be used as documentation for the cash award but the cash award must be granted first.

F. Duplicate Suggestions:

Duplicate suggestions are those which propose substantially the same solution to the same problem at the same place or for the same area. Suggestions proposing similar solutions to the same problem in two different offices would not necessarily be duplicate suggestions. For

example, work unit conservationists from two different areas could submit the same suggestion for improving work within their own area. Each could be paid on the basis of tangible or intangible benefits to his area. If the suggestion were then applied State-wide, however, the additional award, if any, would be divided between them if they had submitted it simultaneously or to the first one getting his idea in if they had not. Suggestions proposing the same technique to two different problems would not be duplicate suggestions. Usually the first suggestor will be entitled to credit for an award. In the event a second one makes a separate contribution or contributes toward the adoption of the original suggestion, he would be entitled to an award in proportion to his contribution.

SECTION V--DEPARTMENT HONOR AWARDS

There are three types of Department honor awards: Distinguished Service Award, Superior Service Award and Length-of-Service Award.

A. Distinguished Service Awards:

1. Description: Employees whose achievements gain them the Distinguished Service Award (individual citation) receive a gold medal, a certificate, and a gold lapel emblem. The Distinguished Service Award (unit citation) consists of a gold medal and a plaque identifying the unit and briefly describing the achievement.
2. Eligibility standards for the Distinguished Service Award: Any employee whose achievement constitutes a notably outstanding contribution to agriculture and to the public service is eligible for consideration for the Distinguished Service Award. It is not possible to foresee and list all the outstanding accomplishments through which an individual may distinguish himself in the various fields served by the SCS, but the following illustrative examples will serve as a general guide:
 - (1) Outstanding service to agriculture and rural life;
 - (2) Major contribution to science;
 - (3) Outstanding skill in public administration;
 - (4) Distinguished authorship;
 - (5) Notably creative service;
 - (6) Heroic action.

Two or more employees may each receive awards for a distinguished achievement in which they share. The Distinguished Service Award (unit citation) will be presented when a team, project group, or organization unit accomplishes a distinguished achievement and when it is not feasible or appropriate to separate contributions of the participants. Achievements considered but passed over by the Board for Distinguished Service Awards will be considered for the Superior Service Award.

B. Superior Service Awards:

1. Description: An employee who gains the Superior Service Award (individual citation) receives a silver medal, a certificate, and a silver lapel emblem. The superior service award (unit citation) consists of a silver medal and a plaque identifying the unit and briefly describing the achievement.
2. Eligibility standards: An employee who has performed service of unusual value beyond that ordinarily required is eligible for consideration for the Superior Service Award. The Superior Service Award is presented for meritorious performance, such as illustrated below:
 - (1) Meritorious service to agriculture and rural life;
 - (2) Valuable contribution to science;
 - (3) Effective public administrations;
 - (4) Meritorious authorship;
 - (5) Unusual courage or competence in an emergency;
 - (6) Meritorious service of a creative nature;
 - (7) Meritorious execution of duties, establishing an exemplary record;
 - (8) Initiation of a suggestion that has resulted in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment;
 - (9) Initiative in devising work methods that result in important savings in money, time, material, personnel, or equipment;
 - (10) Achievement in improving the morale of employees with consequent improvement in work performance.

Two or more employees may each receive awards for a meritorious achievement in which they share. A superior service award (unit citation) is presented when a team, project group, or organization unit accomplishes a meritorious achievement and it is not feasible or appropriate to individually identify the participants or their respective contribution. Employees retiring from the Service will not be awarded superior service awards merely on the basis of long service. Determination of the eligibility of such employees for awards should be made at the time when performance justifies that action and ordinarily should not be postponed until retirement. Nominees failing to receive the superior service award will be considered for the agency award.

C. Length-of-Service Awards:

1. Description: Ten or more years of service with the Department is deemed to be worthy of recognition by award of an appropriate length-of-service emblem. The Length-of-Service Award consists of a miniature shield and a certificate. The emblem has an enamel panel of green for 10 years of service, white for 20, red for 30, blue for 40, and gold for 50. State and Territorial offices will maintain a current supply of emblems and certificates. The supply should be

requisitioned from the Department Central Supply. Length-of-Service awards will be reviewed for possible additional recognition with a Soil Conservation Service citation when the work during the award period has been especially meritorious.

2. Eligibility standards for the Length-of-Service Award: Each employee who has completed 10 or more years of service in the Department may be recognized by the Length-of-Service Award after completion of his tenth year and at 10-year intervals thereafter. Service will be computed on a net basis. Rolls of persons employed on a full-time basis will be prepared from existing Service records. A person employed on an intermittent basis for a net total of 10 or more years may apply for a length-of-service award, in each case submitting a statement of his service with the Department. Service in another agency of the Department is eligible service. Time on military furlough from the Department also is eligible.
 - a. Employees who leave the Service in the future: When an employee who has more than 10 years of service in SCS leaves under honorable conditions, he should be given upon request a length-of-service certificate showing the exact number of years he has served.
 - b. Employees who have already left the Service: Employees who served 10 or more years in SCS and who left under honorable conditions shall, upon their request, be given a length-of-service certificate showing the exact number of years they have served in the Service and the appropriate length-of-service pin.

D. Nominations for Department Honor Awards:

1. Distinguished and Superior Service Awards: The State and Territorial Awards Committees will forward recommendations for these awards to the Washington Committee by January 1 of each year. Any employee may recommend nomination of another employee or group of employees to the State or Territorial Committees.
 - a. Form of Recommendations: Nominations shall be submitted in an original and nine copies. They should be dittoed or mimeographed. The following information should be furnished in the order shown:
 - (1) Nomination for award (distinguished or superior service);
 - (2) Name of agency;
 - (3) Nominee's name (as it is intended to appear on award certificate);
 - (4) Grade, designation, and salary;
 - (5) Official headquarters;
 - (6) Suggested citation (limited to approximately 30 words);
 - (7) Detailed description of achievement including factual information. (Attach to recommendation a copy of nominee's position description.)

b. Exhibit Material: Reference material published or compiled by the nominee need not be supported by the submission of the material itself. However, agencies should be in a position to furnish such exhibit material upon request by the Board.

2. Nominations for Length-of-Service Awards: State and Territorial Conservationists will send to the Washington office before March 15 each year a list of names, in alphabetical order, of those to receive 40- and 50-year awards and the total number of those receiving 10-, 20-, and 30-year awards. The Washington office will transmit all nominations to the Department by April 1 each year. If an employee is overlooked and does not receive an award due him he should notify his supervisor.

E. Review and Approval of Department Honor Awards:

1. Distinguished and Superior Service Awards. Nominations for these awards are reviewed by the Washington Awards Committee. Those nominations approved by the Administrator are sent to the Department for final review and approval. Nominations which do not qualify for the Department Superior Service Award will be considered automatically by the Washington Awards Committee for the Agency citation.
2. Length-of-Service Awards: Records for length-of-service awards are maintained at the State, Territorial or Washington offices for all individuals attached to the respective offices. Approval is automatic with completion of required service.

F. Presentation of Honor Awards:

Presentation of Department honor awards is made with appropriate ceremony on May 15 each year (the date when Agriculture was established as an independent bureau in 1862) and at such other times as the Secretary may designate. Distinguished Service Awards are presented by the Secretary of Agriculture. Superior Service and 40- and 50-year length-of-service awards are presented by the Secretary or by the Administrator of SCS. The 10-, 20-, and 30-year length-of-service awards will be presented by State and Territorial Conservationists or by the Administrator for employees attached to the Washington office.

SECTION VI--OTHER AWARDS

A. Presidential Award:

Presidential Awards are administered by the Civil Service Commission and are granted as a cash or honorary award by the President of the United States for contributions of unusually distinctive character or very widespread benefits. A Presidential Award may be granted in addition to the Department honor awards described in this handbook. It is the highest honor a civilian employee may receive.

B. Soil Conservation Service Citation:

Employees or groups of employees whose achievements merit Service-wide recognition will be given a Soil Conservation Service Citation. The award may be for any outstanding contribution which advances the Service program of soil and water conservation. The citation is a certificate signed by the Administrator.

1. Nomination: Any employee may nominate an individual or group of individuals for an agency citation. The nomination should include the following:

- (1) Name of individual or individuals;
- (2) Official headquarters and unit;
- (3) Grade and salary; period covered;
- (4) Detailed description of the achievement;
- (5) Suggested citation -- approximately 30 words.

Nine copies of nominations for agency citations should be in the Washington office by January 1 each year.

2. Review and Approval: The nominations will be sent through channels to the State or Territorial Management Improvement and Awards Committee or the Washington Committee for employees attached to the Washington office. The State or Territorial Committee will review nominations received and send those which they approve to the Washington Committee with their recommendation. The Washington Committee will review and send them to the Administrator with its recommendation. The Administrator will approve deserving nominations, sign the certificates and return them to appropriate headquarters for presentation.

C. Safety Awards:

Outstanding Safety Records are recognized in the following ways, depending upon the significance of the record:

1. Letter of commendation;
2. Safe Driving Cards for 5-, 10-, 15-, and 20-year records;
3. Certificates to units operating without disabling injuries over specified periods of time.
4. Cash or Honorary Awards for Outstanding safety records.

Approval of safety awards is automatic with the expiration of time without accidents based upon records maintained at State, Territorial and Washington offices.

D. Letters of Commendation:

There are many instances of meritorious job performance in SCS that deserve recognition but that do not qualify for the honor or cash awards previously mentioned. Individuals or groups performing such work are deserving of

commendation. For this purpose, letters of commendation should be used. All supervisors have the authority and responsibility to use this method of recognizing deserving employee performance. The supervisor may write the letter himself or he may recommend that it be written at any level of administration -- Area, State, Territory or by the Administrator for especially meritorious work. Ordinarily letters of commendation will be prepared and sent to the individual or groups as soon as the performance comes to the attention of the supervisor.

Copies of all letters of commendation to employees within a State or Territory will be filed in the official employee personnel folders in the State or Territorial offices. In addition, copies of all letters of commendation will be sent to the Washington Personnel Management Division.

SECTION VII--RECORDS AND REPORTS

A. Records:

The Soil Conservation Service will use two forms for record purposes in the Management Improvement and Awards Program. These are Work Improvement Proposal, Form SCS-228 and Awards Appraisal Form SCS-227.

1. Work Improvement Proposal Form SCS-228: This form is provided for use by individuals or groups of individuals to submit management improvement suggestions. Its use is not mandatory. The suggestion is submitted to the immediate supervisor who records his action by completing the first line at the bottom of the form. The suggestion proceeds through channels until it reaches the appropriate Management Improvement and Awards Committee. Ordinarily there will not be more than three individuals reviewing the suggestion between the employee and the committee. For example, a suggestion from an engineering aid would go to the engineer; then to the work unit conservationist; to the area conservationist; and finally to State Management Improvement and Awards Committee. See sample attached.
2. Awards Appraisal Report Form SCS-227: This form will be used to record information and action taken on all work improvement proposals and recommendations for cash awards for job performance. It will be prepared in triplicate. One signed copy without attachments will be sent to the appropriate fiscal officer for all approved cash awards to support payment. One copy without attachments will be sent to the Washington Awards Committee for all proposals, approved or rejected. If a suggestion is being recommended for possible use in other states or Service-wide, a copy of Form 228 will be attached to the Washington copy of the appraisal form.

The original copy of the form with attachments will be placed in the approved or rejected files of the awards committee. This copy, with attachments listed below, will document and support the action taken on each employee's contribution. The files will be maintained in a suitable manner for inspection by the Washington office, the Department, the Civil Service Commission or the General Accounting Office.

Documents normally attached to the original copy of the appraisal form for this purpose will be:

- a. The original copy of the employee suggestion or recommendation for performance award;
- b. Comments and recommendations of line officers and technical specialists who reviewed the contribution;
- c. Statement of method used to determine monetary savings, if any;
- d. Statement accounting for the savings as either appropriation savings, increased output at the same cost, or application of resources saved to some other necessary activity;
- e. Statement of method used in computing the award;
- f. Attach, when applicable, a copy of the standard of performance and a statement as to how performance exceeded normal requirements. Justification for honor awards or outstanding ratings may be used to document cash awards, but such cash awards must be granted prior to the honor award. General endorsement of an award recommendation by an employee's supervisor does not in itself constitute an adequate basis for granting an award.

3. Filing:

For ease in preparing the annual report of the Government Employees Incentive Awards Program, it is suggested that rejected and approved proposals be filed in separate folders, by fiscal years. At the beginning of a new fiscal year only the pending proposals and recommendations are maintained in the active files and new folders started for approved and rejected.

B. Reports:

Annual Reports, Form SF-69: This report is required by the Department of Agriculture by August 15, for the preceding fiscal year. State and Territorial Conservationists will submit one copy of the report to the Washington office by July 15, each year. The Washington office will consolidate the reports for the Department. Sections which do not apply at State or Territorial level will be left blank on copies submitted by these offices. General comments as suggested in Section "E" should be attached. These will be helpful for improving the SCS program as well as reporting to the Department. See sample attached.

SUMMARY OF S.C.S. AWARDS PROGRAM

TYPE OF AWARD	INITIATED BY	WHEN INITIATED	REVIEWED BY	APPROVED BY
Cash for work improvement proposals.	Employee on Form SCS 228.	Any time.	Supervisor, Awards Committee or Technical Staff as needed.	State or Territorial Conservationist or the Administrator for Washington employees.
Cash for Job Performance or special act or service.	Supervisor.	Usually at time of Performance Rating.	Awards Committee Technical Supervisors.	State or Territorial Conservationist or the Administrator for Washington employees.
Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service.	Nomination by any individual through channels to Award Committee.	To Washington by January 1. To State office by November 1.	Supervisors, Award Committees SCS Administrator Department Award Committee.	Secretary of Agriculture.
Department of Agriculture Superior Service.	Nomination by any individual through channels to Awards Committee.	To Washington by January 1. To State office by November 1.	Supervisors, SCS Award Committees SCS Administrator, Department Awards Committee.	Secretary of Agriculture.
SCS Citation	Nomination by any individual through channels to Awards Committee.	To Washington by January 1. To State office by November 1.	Supervisors, Award Committees, Local and National.	SCS Administrator.
Length-of-service	Automatically by State, Territorial or Washington Administrative Officer.	March 15.	State, Territorial or Washington Awards Committees.	State or Territorial Conservationist or the Administrator for Washington employees.
Safety Awards*	By State, Territorial or Washington offices.	March 1, each year.	Automatically approved when safety records indicate award is due.	Awarded by State or Territorial Conservationist or the Administrator for Washington employees.
Letters of Commendation.	Supervisors.	Whenever deserved	Not needed.	Not needed.

* A Cash or Honor Award may also be given for outstanding safety records.

